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Shooting Straight: Graphic versus Non-Graphic War Photographs

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Shooting Straight: Graphic versus Non-Graphic War Photographs

by

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Dedication

To Little Harry

("H. J." - Harry Hardy Williamson, Jr.)

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Abstract

Shooting Straight: Graphic versus Non-Graphic War Photographs

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An experiment showed that audiences react with more empathy to graphic war photographs accompanying news reports than non-graphic war photographs. Four war stories from four different countries, featuring either a graphic or non-graphic photograph representing a scene from each report, were used to test respondents' reactions. Empathy measured higher after audience exposure to graphic war photographs, while recall, central processing, emotion, media attitudes, and civic participation all did not show significant differences from graphic to non-graphic. As a result of this study, editors and news organizations can be assured that audiences may not react with a significant amount of emotion, but will still care significantly more about an issue after being presented with graphic news photographs of war with war reports, as opposed to non-graphic photographs of war.

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Introduction

War zones, battlefields, protests, revolutionary uprisings, or terrorist acts - all are portrayed in photographs that can convey varying information, producing different effects on audiences, whether intended or not. Effects from such scenes can make enough difference in the public's views (Graber, 1996) to affect policy. Therefore, which effects are derived from these war photographs can be crucial. Though footage from combat scenes can undermine support for war in general (Pfau, Haigh, Shannon, Tones, Mercurio, Willams, Binstock, Diaz, Dillard, Brown, Elder, Reed, Eggers, Melendez, 2008), photographs that depict suffering and horror from those types of scenes can have a different effect on audiences than photographs that depict destroyed buildings and streets (Graber, 1990). The different effects can be complicated, numerous, and wide ranging: while some audiences may be upset about having to see horrible photographs, others may feel that they are being kept from the real truth of war (Hamill, 2004) if photographs are too benign. This study delves into some of the issues involved that produce responses from both ends of the spectrum, taking measures to explain those differences and their effects.

Using war photographs that are either highly graphic (such as those depicting dead bodies and violence) or photographs that are non-graphic (depicting destroyed buildings, cars, streets, and other inanimate objects), this experiment and study compares audiences' specific responses to graphic versus non-graphic war photographs to see how

viewers' reactions will differ. The differences will be measured in the areas of recall, emotion, empathy, central processing, media attitudes, and civic participation.

Does one kind of photograph elicit more emotion from an audience, which might make them feel stronger about the issue? Do more intense photographs from war evoke more empathy from audiences? Does such an image make an audience think longer and harder about the subject? And does a difference emerge in audiences' intentions to participate in civic life?

Literature and Theoretical Review

A newspaper photograph from a bombing scene that shows part of a body may bring some angry phone calls in the morning from people who felt the presentation was not appropriate for viewing over breakfast, or for the possibility of their children running across it. According to Dallas Morning photo editor Cheryl Diaz Meyer, parents are horrified that their children could be exposed (Robertson, 2004) to such sights. On the other hand, a photograph that shows none of the real consequences or resulting death in more mundane war scenes may cause audiences to gloss over information. It may look like everything else they have seen, and/or it may cause critics to charge that what American audiences see in their news is "a war without blood" (Hamill, 2004). In addition, there are possible longer-term consequences, such as either leading the public to an erroneous or volatile view, or, possibly helping to create an apathetic public. The many possible outcomes make decisions complicated and difficult when whether to run horrific war photographs or more mundane photographs with war reports, on deadlines. Yet photo editors are confronted with these decisions under time constraints almost daily, resulting in some expected as well as unintended consequences and criticism.

Audience effects from photographs in general have been explored in social science and journalism. However, little scientific research has been completed on specific effects of war imagery on audiences, even though there has been controversy about war photography since photography was invented and unleashed immediately on the Crimean

War (Cassidy, 2006). This study addresses this very complicated issue, which involves one of the most important jobs of the press: presenting information from war affecting audiences' ability to learn about the world they live in and govern themselves (Singer, 2000). Specifically, this study uses a controlled experiment to examine the effects of graphic versus non-graphic war photographs on audiences' recall, elaborations, emotions, empathy, and civic participation intentions.

The study is important because now more than ever, the press is following multiple conflicts around the world on a daily basis, and the public is challenged with retaining and making sense of all of it. It is important to journalism because of the challenge to maintain the objective of reporting true facts to facilitate understanding and ultimate necessary changes in a volatile world. Though there have been some studies that either measure media as a whole, or media's words separately, or media visuals separately - there has been little study on the exact effects from war photographs in particular. The results of this study will help move research closer to understanding of the effects of different types of war photography on media recipients, and possibly how editors and news organizations can communicate better with the war images, trusting that public decisions for democratic control is the aim.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Photographs are typically referred to as "graphic" when they contain such items as dead bodies, body parts, large amounts of blood, and/or apparent emotion on faces depicting horror. An example would be Eddie Adams' execution photo of the Viet Cong officer

being shot in the head during the Vietnam War. (http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102112403). Other examples are the more recent photographs of people falling down from the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. The earliest war photographs displayed bodies strewn across fields, such as the photographs of Mathew Brady's company in the Civil War. Robert Capa's 1936 "Falling Soldier" photograph of the moment the soldier was shot in the Spanish-American War, was one of the first that showed battle in action in such a graphic manner. Some graphic photographs, though as meaningful as Osama Bin Laden's death, are deemed gratuitously graphic, with "gratuitous" meaning, as Bill Keller of the New York Times said (Farhi, 2011) in an online Washington Post quote: "besides being disturbing, (they) don't have journalistic value." Such photos are generally avoided (Farhi, 2011).

Photographs showing the aftermath of a war event, such as a suicide bombing, that contain only destroyed buildings and cars, burned and damaged streets, are considered to be "non-graphic." Such photographs of the streets in the Middle East littered with vehicles on fire, and people standing or walking around, exemplify this scenario. There are many more of these particular kinds of photographs available to accompany war reports. The scene is not active at that time, it is more accessible, and it remains long after the event for photographers to arrive and record, while most of the wounded and bodies have been attended to.

GATE KEEPING WAR PHOTOGRAPHS

The original "Gate Keeper" (White, 1950) was described as someone in the position at a newspaper who chose or cast aside items that would be published in the newspaper. One of these traditional positions is the photo editor, which is now more recently augmented or supplanted entirely with page designers for print and Web sites as newspapers downsize. Such editors might choose photographs depending on available space. Other issues may come into play, primarily how important management deems a particular war event to be, and how much display and space should be made available. There is a hierarchy of influences over these gates and gate keepers (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), which includes everything from deadlines to shrinking resources, affecting the circumstances for news decisions concerning photographs.

The gate keepers at news organizations often choose from war photographs provided to them by new services such as Associate Press (AP), Reuters, New York Times (NYT), Agence France Presse (AFP), etc., that supply information and photographs to newspapers and other media companies when their own staff is not on the scene of the war zone. Editors can choose between the hundreds or thousands of images provided each day by such outlets online to match their news stories for the media they are assembling -- newspapers, magazines, online sites, or a combination of these media. However, gate keepers at news organizations can only control what is made available.

A catch 22 of gate keeping can result: if news organizations are not likely to publish graphic war photographs because of a fear of upsetting audiences, news sources

may not provide them. The Associated Press has been known to hold back on some photos from war, refusing to spend money on photos they know the editors are not likely to use or spend money on anyway, due to the possibility of offending readers (Bennett & Entman, 2001). In such cases, the images don't even reach editors, so readers never have a chance of seeing those withheld news images. This is one factor that can contribute to a filtered look at the war contributing at times to the criticism that the press has been too delicate in its gate keeping (Robertson, 2009)

Conversely, when the U.S. military asked the AP not to make Julie Jacobson's photograph of U.S. soldier Joshua Beard dying in Afghanistan available to the press, AP refused to comply, ultimately angering Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (Buell, 2009). But at times it seems such requests by those in power are honored, especially when there are close relationships between the media and the government. Embedding reporters with the military can even cause a report to focus on advances of military operations instead of on the results of military action (Pilger, 2007), promoting messages the military would prefer.

In recent years, new opportunities for editing choices have been made available, as graphic photographs are often saved for online sites. Because it is feared by news organizations that highly graphic photos can turn audiences and subscribers away from the story and the news organizations, they strive to honor reader's wishes by not publishing harsh photographs in print (Silcock, Schwalbe, & Keith, 2008). These online sites at least give editors a place to put a photograph if it is deemed too graphic for print. However, because of the traditional role of their positions as gate keepers, many editors

would dispel that and say that they edit no differently online than for the newspaper.

FRAMING WAR PHOTOGRAPHS

Framing is the process of gathering only a few elements of a reality and presenting them so that only the parts that are meant to be seen are highlighted (Entman, 2007). This can be in any format – words, sound, video, but it is illustrated by visual terms where information can also be "framed." Visual manipulation by way of selection of material that can be seen within a photographic frame is one way an image could present only a certain view (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Angle of view, cropping, and perspective are all ways of presenting an image in a certain way. Being objective and not putting a frame on news items such as stories and photographs has been the perceived goal, so framing would not have a place with neutral journalism, which advocates presenting news with no particular point of view (Altheide, 1976). However, presenting news from no angle has been argued as not only impossible, but irresponsible. It has been argued that the press should be able to frame information with or without a political stance for proper understanding, no matter the possibility of inflaming subscribers (Altheide).

The entire chain of news procurement within a news organization can ultimately set a frame purposefully or not as a result of one or a combination of events: original framing of the photograph when it was shot, the selection of photographs sent by the news service, the choice of the editor, or even where it is placed. All of these can contribute in the end to the media machine imposing its own logic on any given situation

(Shoemaker & Reese, 1991).

Editing out the most horrific war photographs could result in the presentation of news contributing to a perceived unbalanced coverage (Buell, 2009). It has been charged that news organizations' choices of benign photos to tell stories has resulted in a belief by many that "the press has crept toward the conservative over the years in its handling of graphic images" (Robertson, 2009, p.46). Or, it could be perceived as the opposite.

After Vietnam, when the press was blamed for shifting pubic support for the war (Schanberg, 1991), the press tried to cooperate more with the government. Since then, for fear of being labeled unpatriotic once again, the press has gone to extreme lengths not to offend the government or audiences in the U.S. (Robertson, 2009). Such compliance makes it more difficult to challenge authority (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). In addition, because coverage has been more difficult, working closer with the government to cover the war in the way of accepting material from pool arrangements and embedments with troops, has been more convenient and cost effective (Schanberg, 1991; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). In all, working so closely with the military and government for access puts the press in a compromised position, contributing to additional bias, or worse, the "ultimate censorship" (Schanberg, 1991, p. 370).

Bias can be subtle as well. Audiences can be susceptible to bias just because of an over abundance of non-graphic images in their news, due to repetition (Zillman, 2000).

DIFFERENCES IN RECEPTION

Even within a certain audience, there are differences in that not all individuals will react exactly the same way to the same message (de Vreese, Boomgaarden, Semetko, 2011). The perceived importance of any particular part of a situation can vary from person to person (Petty, Preister, Briñol, 2002) so a message can carry entirely different meanings for different people, and on different occasions (Parry, 1968). The possible results of cognitive difference levels range from minimal to extreme discrepancy, and even complete re-interpretation (Pryluck, 1976). The simple idea that information is processed in order to give meaning to experience (Kracauer, 1960) can become very complicated. However, recognizing the various potentials for misunderstandings is required for successful communication (Burgoon, 1996).

Recall

One of the most important effects of any news message, including photographs, is whether audiences remember, or *recall*, the information, and what details they remember about it.

There are strong arguments that photographs in general help audiences retain information longer than just information from words (Paivio & Csapo, 1973). Several theories support this recall ability, such as the heuristic systems model (Severin &

Tankard, 2001), the dual coding model (Paivio, 1973), and elaboration likelihood mode (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

One argument posits that images are more believable because for the majority of people, most of life is experienced visually (Graber, 1996). Because the visual experience of seeing a photograph mimics viewing real life, what is seen in photographs are more believable just as what is seen in life is more believable than what is heard (Graber).

In addition, by viewing a scene in a photograph, audiences often get a sense of participation in an event, or of having been there to witness the event, photographs have the capacity to mirror incidences in real life (Graber, 1996). This makes it easier to identify with the people in the photograph and become emotionally involved (Graber).

Another reason (and argument of the previous) is that photographs tend to give credibility to issues because of the idea that "seeing is believing" (Graber, 1987 p.74). This is because humans learned to survive largely due to their innate visual surveillance. Theories of surveillance and visual perception take us back to the early history of humankind when humans used their surveillance skills for basic survival (Newton, 2001).

In addition, it has been found that visual images are easier to recall than text because they are more realistic, dramatic, and include more detail (Graber, 1996). In one study (Graber), more than half the people who saw images on audio video files remembered more of the information than those who only read texts.

Another important contributor to the ability for recall is dual coding. This theory states that information is stored in the brain by two paths: one path of verbal information and one path of visual (Paivio, 1991), which can last longer. As verbal information fades

over the passage of time, the brain can then rely on the information attained through the path of visual coding for memory. Therefore, while information from an image might not manifest itself immediately, its lingering effects could grow over time (Zillman, 2000).

Additionally, repetition alone can influence memory. Repeated information helps retain some of the information burned into audiences' minds from seeing something multiple times (Zillman, 2000).

While photographs can add information, often they simply re-enforce. Sometimes photographs with congruent text do not give additional information, but merely back up memory of other material (Katz, Adoni, Parness, 1977). Yet studies by Graber produced results that show that pictures can enhance the story line and add information (1996).

In studies with audiovisual materials compared to words only materials, images increased recall of details (Graber, 1991). However, when photographs accompanied information that was not congruent, it confused subjects and their memory suffered. Since audiences retain a maximum of about three things from news stories (Graber, 1991), a detail-packed image containing information that conflicts with thoughts already formed about the story may cause confusion. In addition, emotional visuals may interfere with the accurate storage of facts from verbal messages, though this differs depending on whether the emotions invoked are negative or positive (Graber, 1996).

When presented without confusion, error rates drop in recall because of viewing photographs with stories (Graber, 1996). This is because photographs can relay to the audience more detail while portraying relationships between items, issues, and people in them (Pryluck, 1976). For instance, the word "chair," even with some descriptives, can

mean many things in words, such as a comfortable recliner, a front porch rocker, or an old rickety version of a chair. Meanwhile, a photo of a chair can transmit all that information at once, and more fully (Pryluck, 1976).

These are some basic understandings of the effects of photographs on recall. However, these findings have not been tested specifically on graphic versus non-graphic war photographs with war reports. The political and highly emotional nature of war photographs may produce different results than the types of photographs that have been tested so far. Therefore, it is important to see if the same results apply, or if graphic war photographs produce different effects. Thus the first hypothesis is:

H1: Graphic war photographs that accompany a story will cause audiences to recall significantly more information than non-graphic war photographs that accompany the same story.

CENTRAL PROCESSING

Photographs in general are known to contribute to cognitive elaboration, or thinking more deeply (Lynn, Shavitt & Ostrom, 1985) Specifically, *Elaboration Likelihood Theory (ELM)* as established by Petty & Cacioppo (1986), describes two different methods of processing information – *peripheral or central processing* of information in the brain. While both can be influenced, central processing, or deeper thinking, can be targeted for influence (Priester, et al., 1999). Central route processing is likely depending on an individual's motivation to elaborate, such as needing to know how relevant the subject is.

A similar theory on mental processing of information is the heuristic-systematic model (Chaiken,Liberman, Eagly, 1989), but ELM is more expansive beyond the prior model's use of rules in peripheral thinking (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

Personal relevance is a possible motivation for central processing, and another is a need for cognition (Whithers & Wertheim, 2004). Central processing is based on the idea that audiences want to form correct opinions about the world around them (Petty, Kasmer, Haugtvedt, Cacioppo, 1987). If people believe that certain issues are important, they will have more likelihood of central processing those issues (Petty et all, 2002). Also, if personal relevance is perceived and people think their own lives might be affected, audiences are even more inclined to process centrally as they become more motivated to do the cognitive work (Petty et al. 1986). Once they have processed centrally, they then try to find a way to incorporate it into their thinking on the subject (Petty et al.). Attitudes affected by the peripheral routes tend to be less effective or lasting (Petty et al.). Assuming people feel that the topic of war is of importance, and that audiences want to re-evaluate the latest situations and how it is relevant to them, it stands to reason that war photographs, in particular war photographs that made them feel most present at the scene, would make them more likely to process centrally about the issues.

H2: Graphic war photographs are significantly more likely to cause audiences to centrally process the issues presented than non-graphic war photographs.

EMOTION AND EMPATHY

Emotions were developed in humans in order to deal with life tasks and encounters (Ekman, 1992). Imagery may use the same sensory signals that humans respond with affectively (Mammarella, 2011) and emotional imagery activates the same brain system involved in processing emotions (Mammarella). Because perceptions and processes in imagery overlap, imagined events (such as scenes in photographs) may feel as if they are real (Holmes, Geddes, Colom, Goodwin, 2008).

Emotional stimuli demand more attention, as do high impact images over low impact images (Murphy, Hill, Ramponi, Calder, Banard, 2010) and people pay greater attention to emotional stimuli than they do neutral stimuli (Murphy et al.). Because of their adaptive/survival significances, emotional stimuli receive preference (Murphy et al.). Also, cognitive processes involving mental imagery have a more powerful impact on emotion than verbal processing (Holms et al., 2008). It can even have an amplifying effect (Holmes). Further, studies show that informational displays that evoke emotions (such as photographs) cause them to be remembered better (Zillman, 2000).

H3: Graphic war photographs are more likely to produce significantly stronger emotional reactions from audiences than non-graphic war photographs.

The word *empathy* is derived from *empatheia* in Greek – meaning "feeling into" (Campbell & Babrow, 2004) and is described as the ability to experience vicariously the feelings of others (M. Hoffman, 1977), or sharing the subjective experience of others

(Campbell & Babrow). Empathy is not considered an emotion and is not on Plutchik's wheel of emotions (Plutchik, 2001), which includes joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger and anticipation, as well as their opposites. However, empathy is related to emotion because empathy makes the leap to the emotions of others. It is also considered close to the secondary emotion of sympathy, which is categorized as a tertiary emotion connected to sadness (Plutchick, 2001). Sympathy is different from empathy however, because while sympathy means the ability to realize and be aware of a person's sadness, empathy means the ability to really feel their sadness. There are several necessary components of empathy: 1) identification, 2) understanding the context, 3) emotional concordance, 4) concern for the other, and 5) realism (Campbell & Babrow, 2004). Young children have the ability to experience vicariously through others, even from viewing people's expressions in photographs (M. Hoffman, 2000). Through such mediated association, states of emotion (from happy to distressed) can be communicated (M. Hoffman), and the above-mentioned components of empathy can occur. Due to these imaginative and visual human cognitive abilities, victims do not need to be present for audiences to imagine their plight, (M. Hoffman) and visuals alone can induce audiences to care about issues and the people involved (Graber, 1987).

How images are presented in the end could impact audiences' empathy (Dobernig, 2010). If there is pain and suffering identifiable in the faces of people in the photograph, or other content in the photograph that might cause imagination of what the reality depicted is like, audiences can be more affected. Such information can have an effect on even very young audiences, who can view a photograph and respond

empathetically to people who's faces show distress (M.Hoffman,2000). This type of transference can cross culturally, and basic emotions can translate with similar empathetic response as a result (M.Hoffman). Naturally then, seeing emotion in photographs of war could cause similar reactions.

H4: Graphic war photographs are more likely to produce significantly stronger empathetic reactions from audiences than non-graphic war photographs.

MEDIA ATTITUDES

Attitudes are ways of already being in a set mind of thinking and feeling abut things (Murphy, Murphy, & Newcomb, 1937) and as Carl Hovland discovered, are attained while learning (Severin & Tankard, 2001). Attitudes are strong beliefs that the media has been found to be less effective at changing than at reinforcing (Petty, Priester, & Briñol, 2002), which was first evidenced by the non-effects of showing the "Why We Fight" war films to troops in WWII (Severin &Tankard). However, the media was found to have a profound effect on support for the Vietnam War. While media attitudes can be about a particular subject (such as a war or disturbance), or even the media itself (how much trust, belief, and dependability the press has), the possibility of any effect on public's attitudes toward either are worth considering.

Worrying about subscribers' attitudes toward the news organization however, may not be warranted. Though the press may have been blamed for Vietnam and for Watergate by President Nixon and his supporters (Graham, 1997), the Washington Post

stands tall and strong among newspapers today, clearly showing audience approval in the end. Presenting real hard truths may not be what threatens subscriptions long term, and in any case, consideration of such possibility of a loss also goes against the real role of the press. Further, audience intelligence and receptiveness should not be discounted when viewing real war photographs, just as they should not be discounted when it comes to being able to grapple with issues to properly vote (Bennett, 1988). Due to the abilities expected of the public in a democracy, audiences should understand and appreciate the job of graphic war photographs as opposed to non-graphic war photographs. But do they appreciate having to see graphic photographs with war stories for complete consideration of the issues in a war?

H5: Audience media attitudes will be significantly affected after exposure to graphic war photographs as opposed to non-graphic war photographs.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Civic Participation, as well as engagement, responsibility, or activity, means the activity of working to help people beyond a personal realm in order to improve the quality of society in general (Singer, King, Green & Barr, 2002). Because it is frequently lamented that civic engagement is in peril in this day and age (L.Hoffman & Appiah, 2008), it is of extra concern whether different levels of graphicness in war photographs could affect audience's intentions to engage in civic life.

Studies have shown that there is an indirect positive link between media use in general and civic participation (L. Hoffman & Appiah, 2008; McLeod, Scheufele, Moy, 1999). It has also been shown that photographs can alter value judgments ((Mehling, 1959). Such judgments fall into the category of belief in the "belief, attitude, intention, behavior" model of attitude to behavior linkage (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Because photographs have the capacity to induce interest, emotion (Lester, 2006), empathy, and central processing, any photographs from war have the potential to act as the intervening and moderating variables that spur civic participation concerning war. With the emotional and cognitive processes involved in empathy, it is known to foster risk assessments, and is likely to enhance persuasion (Campbell, 2004). Those photographs that elicit the most emotion and empathy could have a more powerful effect, as they may cause the extra deliberation from central processing to make a lasting effect (Campbell). Such a process could influence attitudes, which are known to contribute to behavior (Gastil & Xenos, 2010). Understanding the relationship between how beliefs influence behaviors could help determine how communicative practices (which may involve either graphic or non-graphic war photographs) effect involved democratic citizenship (Gastil & Xenos), which is paramount. Famed documentary photographer Berenice Abbott concurred, as she advocated that realistic images of the world be presented to the public to increase their knowledge, which she felt is necessary for democratic citizenship (Weissman, 2011).

The question is then, if graphic war photographs and/or non-graphic are a specific motivator, and if one is more motivating than the other.

H6: Audiences will be significantly more likely to say they intend to increase participation in civic life when they are presented with graphic war photographs than when they are presented with non-graphic war photographs.

Methods

This study used a controlled experiment to investigate a cause-and-effect relationship of graphic and non-graphic war photographs on audience's emotion, empathy, elaboration, civic participation, and media attitudes. The experiment used a within subjects, simple factorial design. The factor was photographic graphicness (graphic and non-graphic). As a within-subjects design, each participant received all four stories, two in the graphic photo condition and two in the non-graphic photo condition. This allowed the researcher to control for individual differences as each subject acted as his or her own control. It also allowed for an N of 55 because each subject was represented twice. There was no control group with stories only. The stories and photos were rotated using a Latin Squares design. After each story, participants answered questions about their recall, emotions, empathy, elaboration, civic participation and the usual demographic questions.

MATERIALS

Stimulus Stories

There were four war reports compiled from Associated Press archives, one each from Afghanistan, Iraq, Mexico, and Pakistan within the year 2011. Each story from each of the four countries was edited to approximately 100 words in order to ensure that length was not responsible for any effects. The stories were edited to be similar in that each

reported a recent event about a violent war incident that resulted in some deaths, and reported past related events and figures. The same four stories were used for both the graphic and non-graphic photographs.

Stimulus Photographs

There were two photographs chosen for each of the four stories, one graphic photograph relating to the story, and one non-graphic photograph. Photographs came from the AP archives of 2011, and were selected to ensure all were similar in content. A manipulation check (reported below) confirmed this.

The Afghanistan graphic photograph showed a dead body lying in debris with a pool of blood next to a destroyed car and battered wall. An Afghan official in uniform stands in the foreground presumably assessing the situation. The non-graphic Afghanistan photograph displayed a group of people in the street raising their hands and shouting as they burn some items in protest that were distributed by coalition troops (See Appendix for copies of all photographs).

The Iraq graphic photograph displayed a pool of blood in the foreground, with debris in the battered background and people, one with a rifle, standing or walking by. The non-graphic photograph had smoke rising from a recently bombed scene and contained destroyed vehicles and large groups of people standing or carrying an injured or dead person covered on a stretcher in the background.

The graphic photograph from drug battles in Mexico showed a burned body in the

background next to a destroyed car, flames shooting into the air next to it, and a policeman running toward the camera with a gun and shouting directions. The non-graphic image contained a roped off area around a vehicle with masked officials standing and waiting with guns, while another official photographed the scene in the background.

The Pakistan graphic photo showed some people trying to remove a partially covered body in a large pool of blood from a bombing scene. The non-graphic photo was also from a bombing scene, but it showed destroyed buildings and a motorcycle, and debris in the street with people standing and walking around to look.

Each of the eight graphic and non-graphic photographs also had a caption (or cutline) specific to that photograph describing the scene, to clarify any questions a reader might have and to simulate realistic reading conditions. The captions were as follows:

AG: An Afghan policeman stands guard at the scene of an attack near Kabul, Afghanistan, Saturday, where police say a suicide bomber on a motorcycle killed five officers and one civilian. (AP Photo/ Javid Kargar)

ANG: Afghans shout anti-US slogans as they burn blankets, clothing and other items, which were distributed by coalition troops in Ghazni, west of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Tuesday, March 1, 2011. (AP Photo/Rahmatullah Naikzad)

IG: A pool of blood remains after a suicide attacker detonated a car bomb outside a photocopy shop in Al-Jamiyah, Baghdad, Iraq, where Iraqi National Guard applicants

were readying their papers for a nearby recruiting center, Wednesday. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

ING: A dead body is removed after a suicide attacker detonated a car bomb outside a photocopy shop in Al-Jamiyah, Baghdad, Iraq, where Iraqi National Guard applicants were readying their papers for a nearby recruiting center, Wednesday. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

MG: A police officer runs after an attack on police patrol trucks that killed two officers in the border city of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Thursday. Fears were confirmed that the cartels are turning to explosives in their fight against security forces. (AP Photo)

MNG: Investigative police stand by a vehicle that was allegedly abandoned by men suspected of shooting two of their fellow officers in the border city of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Monday. One investigative police officer was killed. (AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)

PG: Pakistani volunteers prepare to pick up the dead body of a person killed by a bombing that struck a Shiite Muslim procession in Karachi, Pakistan, Monday. (AP Photo/Fareed Khan)

PNG: Pakistanis gather near the site of what police believe was a remote controlled bombing in Dera Ismail Khan, killing three police officers, and ten civilians. (AP Photo/Mohammad Sajjad)

The photographs were pre-tested in a manipulation check to make sure that they were considered to be either graphic photographs or non-graphic photographs by ordinary readers. Twenty-seven participants answered questions that determined that the two groupings of photographs – graphic and non-graphic – were indeed different and divisible into the two different categories.

For the manipulation check, questions were attached to all eight photographs, which included the four graphic and the four non-graphic photographs. They were then assembled in a scrambled Latin Square order, so that when recipients went through the photographs there was not a chance of fatigue on the same third and fourth photographs.

There were 19 questions in all, and respondents were asked to respond on a Likert scale for each, with a scale from 1-7 with 1 at the "Strongly Disagree" beginning of the scale and 7 at the "Strongly Agree" end of the scale.

Some examples of these questions that addressed the graphic level of photographs were: "This photo showed detail," "This photo was very graphic," and "This photo included more information than I needed to know."

There were also questions that asked about emotional reactions from photos, to help identify their graphic levels and their response potential. Some examples of these questions that addressed emotional responses from both the graphic and non-graphic

photographs were: “This photo was emotional,” “These photos attracted and held my attention,” and “This photo made me feel very angry.”

The responses were entered into the statistical program SPSS, with a few of the responses on the Likert scales reverse coded. For instance, the question: “This photo included more information than I needed to know” was re-coded to be rated for 7 at the “Strongly Disagree” end of the scale and 1 at the Strongly Agree end of the scale. Emotional response question “This photo did not affect me” was reverse coded.

The results from twenty-seven respondents’ answers were tabulated in SPSS, with each of the four country’s war stories with both Graphic and Non-Graphic Content questions and responses, as well as Graphic and Non-Graphic Emotion questions and responses. The results were:

Afghanistan: Graphic Visual Content 39.55 (7.46), Non-graphic Visual Content 35.37 (6.95), $t = 3.23$, $df = 26$, $p < .01$; Graphic Emotion $M = 45.00$ (12.75), Non-graphic Emotion $M = 35.22$ (13.05), $t = 4.25$, $df = 26$, $p < .001$.

Iraq: Graphic Visual Content $M = 34.85$ (6.87), Non-graphic Visual Content $M = 30.89$ (8.12), $t = 2.86$, $df = 26$, $p < .01$; Graphic Emotion $M = 38.59$ (12.21), Non-graphic Emotion $M = 31.33$ (11.59), $t = 4.20$, $df = 26$, $p = < .001$

Mexico: Graphic Visual Content M = 37.67 (7.15), Non-graphic Visual Content M = 24.96 (12.05), t =5.31, df = 26, p < .001; Graphic Emotion M = 39.48 (13.04), Non-graphic Emotion M = 24.96 (12.05), t = 6.12, df = 26, p < .001.

Pakistan: Graphic Visual Content M = 40.18 (6.35), Non-graphic Visual Content M = 34.44 (7.09), t = 3.80, df = 26, p < .01; Graphic Emotion M = 46.04 (11.11), Non-graphic Emotion M = 30.96 (14.29), t = 5.91, df = 26, p < .001.

PROCEDURE

After reading the story and seeing the photograph, viewers were presented with the first set of questions. At the end of the first set, a second a set of questions addressed demographics.

The independent variables were as follows:

RECALL

For recall, respondents were given three statements to complete concerning details of each story and photograph set, in which they were given five choices to answer: "This event took place in:" 1) Afghanistan 2) Iraq 3) Mexico 4) Pakistan 5) I don't know; "The number of people killed was/were;" 1) 1-5 people 2) 6-10 people 3) 11-49 people 4) 50-100 people 5) over 100 people, and; "Details from the story and photo included: " 1) cars 2) motorcycles 3) crowds of people 4) people cleaning up the area 5) people standing

around (Fiske, Taylor, Etocoff, Laufer, 1979). While the first two questions could score a 1 or 0, the third question could score from 1-5. The three items were summed into an index of correct recall ranging from 0 to 5.

CENTRAL PROCESSING

There were three questions addressing central processing on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, with 1 at Strongly Disagree to 7 at Strongly Agree, for these statements: "I want to review the country's foreign policies," " I was motivated to think about the merits of the story and photograph," and "I gave a lot of thought to the detailed information in this story and photograph**"** (Coleman, 2006).

(Cronbach's alphas: Afghan Graphic: .789, Afghan Non-graphic: .891. Iraq Graphic : .779, Iraq Non-graphic: .712. Mexico Graphic : .779, Mexico Non-Graphic: .785. Pakistan Graphic: .798, Pakistan Non-graphic: .814.)

At the end, an open-ended question asked: "Do you think there is any particular reason why this story and photograph might come across your mind again?"

EMOTION

There were seven questions addressing emotional response, and respondents on the same Likert scale of 1 to 7 with 1 at Strongly Disagree to 7 at Strongly Agree, for these statements: "This story and photograph made me sad," "The story and photograph

made me angry," "The story and photograph were alarming," "The story and photograph disturbed me," "The story and photograph did not affect me" (reverse coded) "The story and photograph made me feel concerned," and "The story and photograph made me anxious" (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972).

(Cronbach's alphas: Afghan Graphic: .803, Afghan Non-graphic: .860. Iraq Graphic: .847, Iraq Non-graphic: .851. Mexico Graphic: .936, Mexico Non-Graphic: .921. Pakistan Graphic: .746, Pakistan Non-graphic: .933.)

At the end, an open-ended question asked: "Is there a particular way to describe the way the story and photograph made you feel? And if so, what would you say that could be?" This provided an extra opportunity for quotes and insights into how people responded to each particular war story and photograph.

EMPATHY

There were four questions addressing empathy on the same Likert scale of 1 to 7 for these statements: "How much empathy did you feel for the people in this dilemma?" "How much compassion did you feel for the people in this dilemma? " "How much did you feel what the people in this dilemma were feeling?" and "How much did you imagine yourself in the place of the people in this dilemma (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972).

(Cronbach's alphas were Afghan Graphic: .790, Afghan Non-graphic: .821. Iraq Graphic: .880, Iraq Non-graphic: .644. Mexico Graphic: .830, Mexico Non-Graphic: .815. Pakistan Graphic: .824, Pakistan Non-graphic: .445.)

At the end, an open-ended question asked: "What other concerns did you have regarding the people in the story and photograph?"

MEDIA ATTITUDES

The media attitude statements segment focuses on audiences' responses toward the media for both their personal use and society. There were 23 questions measured on the same 1 to 7 Likert scale and made the following statements: "As citizens, we have and obligation to view such stories and photographs," "Stories and photographs like this serve society well," This story was informative," "The photograph underscores the severity of the event in the story," "The story and photograph shifted my perspective on the issue," "I appreciate seeing the photographer's view of the scene," "I appreciate getting difficult news even if it is upsetting," and "I respect this news organization for publishing this story and photograph."

The additional following questions were included, but they were reverse coded: "This photograph is harmful for the public to see with the story," "The photograph with the story was not necessary," "The photograph with the story was too graphic, " " I don't want photographs like that in my news," "The photograph was a distraction from the topic," "The photograph discouraged me from reading the story," "The photograph made me less interested in the issue," "This photograph made me lose interest in all news," "I do not believe this story and photograph represent the truth," "This story and photo are just an effort to sell news," "This story and photograph might be upsetting to

surviving family members or citizens, " This story and photograph could move us toward escalation of conflict," "This story and photograph could hurt our nation's efforts," "This story and photograph helps to aid the enemy," and " This story and photograph could incite strong reactions."

(Cronbach's alphas: Afghan Graphic: .841, Afghan Non-graphic: .675. Iraq Graphic: .655, Iraq Non-graphic: .861. Mexico Graphic: .801. Mexico Non-Graphic: .755. Pakistan Graphic: .697, Pakistan Non-graphic: 782.)

Though these alphas were low, they were the best items available, so in keeping with the methodology the study included them – where alphas were much lower, they were dropped and not included. The lowest alphas here, Iraq Graphic: .655 and Afghan Non-graphic: .675, were kept because they were just high enough to show some difference.

MEDIA USE

Media use included two statements and a question. The first statement was: "I read the newspaper:" 1) 1 day a week 2) 2 days a week 3) 3 days a week 4) 4 days a week 5) 5 days a week 6) 6 days a week 7) 7 days a week 8) never. The second statement read: "I see the news on television news or online": 1) never 2) rarely 3) once a week 4) about three days a week 5) about five days a week 6) once a day 7) several times a day. A question followed, asking: "What is your primary source of information regarding news?" 1) Television, 2) newspaper, 3) online news, 4) email, 5) radio, 6) social media

such as Facebook and/or tweets, and 7) telephone communication (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000).

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

There were two questions focused on respondents' past political participation used as a summative index and their future intentions for political participation. The first question about past participation asked: "Have you ever participated in any of the following activities?" 1) Joined a protest, a march, a rally, or a demonstration? 2) Signed a political or social petition on paper or on the Internet? 3) Given money to a non-religious organization concerned with political or social issues (i.e. a political party, environmental or animal rights group, etc.)? 4) Attended a meeting to discuss political or social concerns? 5) Invited people to attend a meeting about political or social concerns? 6) Distributed information or advertisements supporting a political or social interest group? (L.Hoffman & Appiah, 2008; Jian & Jeffres, 2008; National Annenberg Election Studies -NAES, 2008).

The second question addressing future participation intentions asked: "Would you like to participate in any of the following activities?" with the possible answers of: 1) A protest, a march, a rally, or a demonstration? 2) Sign a political or social petition on paper or on the Internet? 3) Give money to a non-religious organization concerned with political or social issues? 4) Attend a meeting to discuss political or social concerns? 5) Invite people to attend a meeting about political or social concerns? 6) Distribute

information or advertisements supporting a political or social interest group? (L.Hoffman & Appiah; Jian & Jeffres; NAES).

Finally, there was an additional open-ended question on political issues: "What other political concerns did you have regarding this story and photograph?"

Results

The purpose of this study was to compare differences in responses to graphic war photographs as opposed to non-graphic war photographs when audiences received them with war stories. Measurements were taken from responses that addressed the areas of recall, central processing, emotion, empathy, media attitudes, and civic participation. The findings are in Table 1.

PARTICIPANTS

Fifty-five respondents participated in the study, and were comprised of students on campus as well as people all across the area that ranged widely in age, occupation, education, gender, and race. They were recruited at restaurants on campus and off campus, at coffee houses, work places, homes, and churches. Participant ages ranged from 18-88 years, with a mean of 42.23 years. Twenty-eight percent were male, and 28% were female. Twenty-four percent were Caucasian; 18% were African American, 8% were Asian, 8% were Hispanic/Latino, 1.8% Native American, and 7.3% were classified as "other." The largest share of 18% had an education level of "some college," while the next largest, at 14%, had a bachelor's degree. Thirteen percent had a graduate degree,

while 7% had some graduate school, and 3% had some high school. Participants' income varied with 23% making less than $14,999 a year to 3% making over $100,000 a year.

In answer to questions regarding religion on the Likert scale from 1-7, with 1 being "Extremely non-religious" to 7 being "Extremely Religious," on average participants identified themselves as moderately religious with a mean score of 3.63. Regarding Ideology with 1 on the Likert scale as "Liberal" and 7 as "Conservative," respondents claimed to be moderate in political beliefs with a mean of 3.96.

Each participant signed and informed consent form per the IRB that also explained that they were entering a drawing for a bank gift card of $50. When the study was concluded, a drawing was held (and photographed) in the UT Journalism office and the gift card of $50 was subsequently delivered to the winner.

RECALL:

Hypothesis 1, which proposed that graphic war photographs would help audiences recall more information than non-graphic war photographs, was not supported. ($t = 4.792$, $df = 54$, $p < .01$, Graphic mean = .49 sd=.13: Non-graphic mean = .616 sd = .19) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Paired Sample t-tests of Graphic and Non-graphic War Photos on Independent Variables

	Graphic	SD	Non-Graphic	SD	t
Recall	.49	.13	6.16	.19	4.79
Central Processing	6.33	1.97	6.17	2.00	1.20
Emotion	16.04	4.42	15.12	4.56	1.49
Empathy	9.01	2.64	8.19	2.14	2.47**
Media Attitude	2.42	.44	2.50	.47	-1.81
Civic Part Likelihood	1.33	.84	1.28	.85	2.47

**p=<.01

CENTRAL PROCESSING

Hypothesis 2, which predicted that graphic war photographs are more likely to cause audiences to centrally process the issues presented than non-graphic war photographs, was not supported. (t = 1.20, df = 52, p = .12; Graphic mean = 6.33, sd = 1.97; Non-graphic mean = 6.17, sd = 2.00) (see Table 1).

EMOTION:

Hypothesis 3, which predicted that graphic war photographs are more likely to elicit emotion from audiences than non-graphic war photographs, was not supported. (t = 1.49, df = 54, p = .,07; Graphic mean = 16.04, sd = 4.42; Non-graphic mean = 15.12 sd = 4.56.) (see Table 1).

EMPATHY:

Results from questions on empathy did support Hypothesis 4, which predicted that graphic war photographs would increase empathetic reaction to the story more than non-graphic war photographs. (t = 2.47, df = 53, p = <,01; Graphic mean = 9.01, sd = 2.64; Non-graphic mean = 8.19 sd = 2.14.) (see Table 1).

MEDIA ATTITUDES

The fifth hypothesis stating audiences' media attitudes would be significantly affected as a result of exposure to graphic war photographs instead of non-graphic war photographs, was not supported. (t = -1.81, df = 54; Graphic mean = 2.42, sd = .44; Non-graphic mean = 2.50 sd = .47.) (see Table 1).

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Hypothesis 6 was not supported. It predicted that respondents would be significantly more likely to say they intend to increase their participation in civic life when they are presented with graphic war photographs than non-graphic photographs. . (t = 2.47, df = 33, p = .20; Graphic mean = 1.33, sd = .84; Non-graphic mean = 1.28, sd = .85.) (see Table 1).

Discussion

The main hypothesis of this study was that graphic photographs of war affect viewers differently than non-graphic photos, specifically by causing them to remember more, process the information more deeply, experience more emotion and empathy, have more positive media attitudes, and want to participate more in civic life. However, the study found that graphic war photos only affected viewers significantly when it came to empathy.

The hypothesis (H4) proposing that empathy would be affected more by graphic war photographs than non-graphic war photographs, was supported. Audiences responded more with a feeling for others after having viewed graphic war photographs as opposed to non-graphic war photographs, and they expressed specific concerns for others in thirty-five open-ended responses.

The thirty-five open-ended statements from respondents expressed empathy that ranged from how they felt sorry for the people in the photographs to sorrow for those who lost their lives and wrote: "It made me feel deeply saddened for innocent lives lost," "Sad for their desperation," "Heartbreaking," and "My heart goes out to the people killed."

The increased empathy shown from graphic war photographs as opposed to

non-graphic photographs of war could be a consequence of the effects of visuals making audiences care about an issue and the people involved in it (Graber, 1987), and respondents' feelings being intensified with increased intensity of graphic material in the photographs. It could be that confronting the reality of the scene in the images more directly reached a deeper response to a need to help, part of human nature's wiring for survival (Eckman, 1992; Newton, 2001) and the ability to transfer the feeling of another's suffering to oneself (Holmes, et al., 2008). Such a reaction would naturally increase an audience's awareness and knowledge of the situation, at least over time (Zillman, 2000).

Though the subjects in the stories and photographs were all citizens of foreign countries, audiences are induced by universal cues in the graphic photographs they viewed. More facial expression was evident in the graphic war photographs, which would have been recognizable by U.S. audiences as some of the distinctive universal signals for basic emotions (Entman, 1992). For instance, there were shocked faces apparent on those moving the bloody body of a Pakistan citizen after a bombing. There was the face of emergency on the officer funning from fire, death, and destruction in the street in Mexico, and a certain alertness of danger evident of the faces of passersby in Iraq.

There could be more than one reason recall was not shown to be enhanced with graphic war photographs. First, it could be that there was too much information involved, and even more so when a more graphic photograph from a

war scene was presented. This could be because of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Seeing horrible graphic qualities in a photograph could possibly change audiences' focus from the information and details of a story to the horrific details in the photograph. For instance, while the story may be stating how many people died and talks about the strategy of the perpetrators as well as the responding government, the image of a bloody scene may take an audience's focus off those details of the story toward disturbing visual particulars of that scene. .

There could be an explanation for the lack of a rise in central processing found by this study as a result of more graphic war photographs. It could be that the four war issues are already so well known that no elaboration is required. The stories were only reporting recent battle details, as opposed to presenting theories for past, present, or future government action or planning. The key motivations that can ignite central processing may have been missing with this requested questionnaire: the need for cognition, and personal relevance (Petty & Caioppo, 1979). It could also be that there is a certain issue fatigue, as none of these wars were new to the public when this questionnaire was given.

Increased central processing may have also been lacking because emotion was also found to b insignificant with exposure to graphic as opposed to non-graphic war photographs. Though the original elaboration likelihood model involves cognitive aspects such as central processing (Petty & Caioppo), it has been viewed as having an emotional component as well (Morris, Woo, Singh, 2005).

A lack of emotion in response to the graphic war photographs could be from issue fatigue as well as compassion fatigue after ten years of war (Kinnick, Krugman, Cameron, 1996; Silcock, et al., 2008). It makes sense that while the public has seen many horrific images, especially from the wars in the Middle East in the last decade, audience emotions in response to certain war conflicts may have been dulled, while the ability to still care about the pain of others remains intact. One respondent even stated in an open-ended question opportunity: "After years of violence in the area, in some ways I feel numb toward it. I still feel for the individuals involved though." Studying compassion fatigue in more depth due to length of time at war and/or specific regional sensitivities could be an important area for further exploration.

While this fatigue may be present now – after a time of peace – that may change to allow more emotional reaction from graphic or non-graphic war photographs. This is another subject ready for future investigation, to see if audience emotion differs from graphic images after a period of war as opposed to a period of peace, and how the press considers adjustments to changes in audience moods or awareness. Other factors may affect such response as well, such as cultural changes, which may be occurring in the U.S. as well as other parts of this fast-changing world.

Audiences' media attitudes were also not significantly moved with exposure to graphic war photographs as opposed to non-graphic photographs of war. Because of this, it seems that editors can worry less about negative reactions toward the

media from presenting graphic photographs with war reports. With less concern about negative media attitudes as a result, editors can concentrate on choosing photographs that tell the best story in accordance with the news of the day in a war zone, instead of worrying about negative repercussions. Though news organizations have been very wary of subscribers dropping away, graphic photographs from war alone are likely not going to contribute significantly to that problem, especially when there are many other factors that may affect subscriptions in this era of changing media.

Though the resulting level of civic participation desire was not heightened by exposure to graphic war photographs in this study, the fact that empathy was induced may be the seed that begins to grow much later in time. Due to dual coding and the fact that empathy was tapped, the memory of graphic photos could be what increases civic participation at a later date, long after first viewing. A future study that measured changes in civic participation or desires for more civic participation after exposure to graphic war photographs as opposed to non-graphic war photographs over a longer period of time, could add valuable information to this type of study.

Limitations

As with all research, there were limitations to this study. An effort was made to ensure that findings were not caused by the origin of the materials in stories and

photographs used, such as what country the photos and stories came from - and it was designed with four different countries as a repetition factor. However, the differences that appeared in spite of this effort could be due to the exact content of the graphic image, even though they were chosen to be similar. The particular contents of each photograph might have been just different enough to make them dissimilar. The level of apparent emotion in the faces portrayed in the graphic war photographs could have been monitored more closely in selection. Different emotional displays might have tilted the results for the category of emotion. For instance, if faces exhibited more similar amounts and/or were more prominent in the photos, there might have been more of a difference.

Outcomes could also be due to the relationship of the U.S with each country, as there was an obvious difference in reaction to stories from certain regions compared to other regions. There may have been some residual anger toward Pakistan for instance, because of non-cooperation and hindrance in capturing Osama Bin Laden. Also, this study was conducted in a border state so respondents' antennae for danger in Mexico might be heightened to produce higher results because of proximity. A study that targeted these regional reactions could be beneficial.

The photos that were used in this study are common and plentiful from recent war events. However, a better comparison to other types of possibilities in war photography could have been employed. Since ire was raised by

photojournalism during the Vietnam War, especially with photos like Eddied Adams' execution photo, such displays are deviant compared to what is more commonly available from war zones today. If such photos more comparable to Adams' were especially sought out and used in this study, the scale might tip to change the gathered results. Including photos that are specifically more in line with Adams' execution photo in contrast with more typical graphic war photographs may be a way to be more precise and in-depth with this study of war photography.

Adjustments to such specifics above could result in more proven effects such as this study's rise in empathetic responses from graphic war photographs over non-graphic war photographs, which is especially helpful for those in the gate keeping positions. From this study, photo editors and news organizations can realize that graphic war photographs have been proven to bring more empathy from audiences than non-graphic war photographs. The study also shows what the photographs might not bring, such as an emotional reaction. And, happily, the lack of a difference in media attitudes means that journalists no longer need to worry so much about angering readers with graphic photographs. The impression that graphic photos cause readers to bolt is anecdotal; this study shows that their attitudes are not significantly more negative when viewing graphic images than non-graphic ones.

The results of the study bring research closer to answering the various questions specifically relating to the necessary dispensing of war news and the

photographs that go with it. Knowing what responses are triggered from graphic or non-graphic war photographs positions the industry and the public for better understanding of perceived results of framing due to editing or gate keeping processes.

Conclusion:

Although there are other ways to look at the effects of war photography, such as categorizing imaging into more "war" or "peace" types of messages (Fahmy & Newman, 2008), this study specifically targeted human reactions in order to dissect those reactions that play a part in concert with so many other factors. It also used terms that are already established and relatable in the working news business, as discussion as well as editing occurs around the idea of graphic as opposed to non-graphic war photographs.

The study brought out empathy as the most significant reaction when viewing graphic war photographs, emphasizing the audiences' ability to feel for others, especially when seeing others in graphic war scenes. The fact that empathy holds up among multiple influences, especially when emotion does not, proves what an important factor it is in communications - especially visual communications involving the high priority of war photographs. It also suggests that graphic photographs can be positive assets to use in communications. If people can view a horrific photo and feel for the people suffering due to the war scene even far away,

yet still hold their emotions in check (i.e. anger), it should add power to the potential for spurring that expected response with the use of graphic war photographs. The idea that a graphic photograph would necessarily incite more outrage or emotion from the public is proven untrue and can be de-emphasized.

This look at empathy and the resulting proof of a rise in empathy from audiences exposed to graphic war photographs more than non-graphic war photographs, advances the knowledge for gate keeping in general and specifically in the more precise area of war photographs. In addition, illustrating that an audience can have empathy while remaining unemotional when addressing flammable issues such as war scenes, gives the ultimate credit deserved to the participants in a democracy – the audience**.** With such proven support of their strength of empathy over emotion, and the expected ability of the audience to make good judgments, gate keepers can feel free and empowered to shoot straight when it comes to presenting the public with realistic information in graphic war photography.

Appendix

GRAPHIC AND NON-GRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHS:

Afghanistan Graphic:

Irag Graphic:

Mexico Graphic:

Pakistan Graphic:

Afghanistan non-graphic:

Iraq non-graphic:

Mexico non-graphic:

Pakistan non-graphic:

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